

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ATHENS 10245 301847Z

44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SY-05 OPR-02 MED-02 /062 W

----- 064073

O P 301740Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1949

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA PRIORITY

DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 10245

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP PFOR ASEC GR US

SUBJECT: ATHENS NEWSPAPER ACCUSES AMERICANS OF ASSISTING "ESCAPE
FROM GREECE" OF WIDOW OF RICHARD S. WELCH

1. AFTERNOON NEWSPAPER ATHINAIKI (LEFT OF CENTER, PRO-PASOK/PAPANDREOU) DECEMBER 30 CARRIED AS IT S MAIN FRONT PAGE STORY A REPORT ALLEGING THAT THE WIDOW OF SLAIN EMBASSY OFFICER RICHARD S. WELCH WAS SPIRITED OUT OF GREECE WITH "THE ASSISTANCE OF THE AMERICANS AND WITH THE FORBEARANCE OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT." ATHINAIKI CATEGORIZED THE DEPARTURE FROM GREECE OF MRS. WELCH--"AN EYE WITNESS TO THE MURDER"--AS A "POLITICAL SCANDAL WHICH DEMONSTRATES THE DEGREE OF DEPENDENCE OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT ON THE WISHES OF WASHINGTON." STORY NOTES FURTHER THAT MRS. WELCH LEFT GREECE FOR NAPLES, WHICH ATHINAIKI CHARACTERIZES "AS THE SEAT OF CIA ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE."

2. WHILE ATHINAIKI ASSERTS THAT IT IS NOT YET KNOWN WHETHER THIS GESTURE OF "GOODWILL" ON PART OF GOG WAS SPONTANEOUS OR NOT, STORY CONTINUES BY NOTING REPORTS ARE CIRCULATING TO THE EFFECT THAT USG
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ATHENS 10245 301847Z

SOUGHT "RELEASE" OF MRS WELCH. IN A BOXED ITEM

ENTITLED "BANANA REPUBLIC," WHICH ABUTS THE MAIN STORY, ATHINAIKI COMMENTARY ASSERTS THAT NOT EVEN IN A "BANANA REPUBLIC" WOULD SUCH A HUMILIATION OF NATIONAL DIGNITY OCCUR. THE COMMENTARY ASKS THE QUESTION "WHO THEN GOVERNS THE COUNTRY--AND WHEN FINALLY WILL GREECE CEASE TO BE A BANANA REPUBLIC."

3. COMMENT: FORMIN BITSIOS TELEPHONED AMB. KUBISCH EARLY THIS AFTERNOON, PROBABLY AS A RESULT OF ATHINAIKI STORY, TO EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT MRS. WELCH'S DEPARTURE BEFORE PROPER INTERROGATION HAD TAKEN PLACE. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT TO BITSIOS, SAYING THAT MRS. WELCH HAD COOPERATED FULLY WITH GREEK AUTHORITIES AND HAD BEEN INTERROGATED AT LENGTH. GREEK INVESTIGATIVE OFFICIALS HAD BEEN KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF HER WHEREABOUTS AND PHYSICAL CONDITION, HAD INDICATED THAT THEY HAD COMPLETED THEIR INTERROGATION OF HER, AND HAD MADE NO OTHER COMMENT CONCERNING HER DEPARTURE OTHER THAN TO EXPRESS CONCERN FOR HER HEALTH. (GREEK INVESTIGATIVE OFFICIALS INTERROGATED MRS. WELCH AT LENGTH ON DECEMBER 24 AND 26, FOLLOWING WHICH SHE SIGNED A STATEMENT, AND HAD INDICATED NO NEED TO QUESTION HER FURTHER.) AMBASSADOR ALSO EXPLAINED THAT MRS. WELCH HAD IN ANY CASE PLANNED TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON FOR HER HUSBAND'S FUNERAL EXPECTED LATER THIS WEEK AND THAT FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH A GREEK PHYSICIAN THE DECISION WAS REACHED THAT SHE SHOULD TRAVEL TO NAPLES DEC 27 FOR FURTHER MEDICAL EVALUATION AT THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCES HOSPITAL THERE IN CONNECTION WITH A SUSPECTED PERFORATED ULCER (ATHENS 10182). BITSIOS SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN AWARE THAT GREEK AUTHORITIES HAD HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO INTERROGATE MRS. WELCH AND INDICATED -- AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT -- THAT HE WAS SATISFIED ABOUT THE MATTER.

4. WE ARE CONSULTING FURTHER WITH APPROPRIATE GREEK OFFICIALS ON THIS POINT AND OFFERING TO ASSIST IN MAKING MRS. WELCH AVAILABLE AGAIN LATER, IF DESIRED, DEPENDING ON CIRCUMSTANCES AND HER OWN CONDITION OF HEALTH. THEY MAY MAKE A CLARIFYING STATEMENT ABOUT THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ATHENS 10245 301847Z

MATTER TO THE PRESS LATER THIS EVENING. EMBASSY IS ALSO CONSIDERING ADVISABILITY OF MAKING A STATEMENT ON THIS MATTER ITSELF AT SOME APPROPRIATE POINT.

5. WE WOULD HOPE THAT MRS. WELCH WOULD NOT HAVE TO RETURN TO GREECE IN EVENT GREEK AUTHORITIES NEEDED TO CONTACT HER FURTHER, GIVEN THE CERTAIN ORDEAL IT WOULD BE FOR HER TO COME BACK TO THE SCENE OF

HER HUSBAND'S MURDER. WE WOULD HOPE THAT ANY
NECESSARY CLARIFICATIONS OR DEPOSITIONS COULD BE
MADE IN WASHINGTON OR ELSEWHERE; HOWEVER, EMBASSY
WILL ADDRESS THIS POINT FURTHER LATER IN THE LIGHT
OF DEVELOPING CIRCUMSTANCES.
KUBISCH

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ATHENS10245
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750450-0287
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975126/aaaaaepy.tel
Line Count: 121
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ATHENS NEWSPAPER ACCUSES AMERICANS OF ASSISTING "ESCAPE FROM GREECE" OF WIDOW OF RICHARD S. WELCH
TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, ASEC, GR, US, (WELCH, RICHARD S)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006